Feedback Session Methodology

In September and October 2011 Desautel Hege Communications (DHC) conducted three feedback sessions with students, staff and faculty and EWU leaders conducted feedback sessions at nine college and department retreats. In these sessions, participants were asked to provide their overall comments and feedback on each area of the strategic plan including

- Mission
- Vision
- Values
- Strategic Plan focus areas
  - Student success
  - Institution of innovation
  - Reputation
  - Community engagement

The feedback sessions were conducted as open forums with invitations sent out campus wide. Approximately 109 total participants attended the three feedback sessions (including EWU and DHC staff). At the forums, participants were given the opportunity to provide additional feedback on index cards. 27 index cards were received.

Feedback sessions were held:

- October 5, 2011 from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. on the EWU Cheney campus
- October 6, 2011 from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. on the EWU Cheney campus
- October 6, 2011 from 4 – 5:30 p.m. on the EWU Riverpoint campus

College and department retreats were held with the following:

- CSBSSW
- CBPA
- CALE
- CSHE
- Library
- Academic Affairs
- Student Affairs
- Business & Finance
- Advancement, Athletics and OIT
**Overall Key Findings**

Key themes emerged across all sessions. These include:

*Simplicity and clarity around what each area means and its intended purpose/use will be important for roll-out and implementation.*

Participants discussed the need for the mission/vision/values and focus areas to be clearly defined in regards to the terms used (example is excellence in learning, student-centered learning). Additionally, participants discussed the need to have clear direction on the intent of the mission, its use internally versus externally and how it gets communicated to audiences.

*The strategic planning committee needs to identify and communicate how the new mission is unique to EWU.*

Participants discussed how the draft mission aligns with the definition of a mission - to articulate an organization’s unique reason to exist. It was discussed that the draft mission did describe EWU, but it wasn’t necessarily unique or specific to EWU and didn’t fit this definition.

*The final mission and vision need to feel more inspiring to audiences.*

Participants discussed that the draft mission and vision, while an accurate representation of EWU, didn’t inspire audiences to achieve more or resonate with them on a personal level.

*Student success needs to be clearly defined and should incorporate faculty and graduate students in a greater capacity.*

Participants discussed the varying ideas about what success means to students versus faculty versus the overall institution and how that is measured. They felt that student success and metrics for this should be clearly defined. In addition, participants discussed the need to integrate the role of faculty and learning in a greater way into the student success focus area. They mentioned that student success and faculty success impact each other and should both be a part of EWU’s goals.

*An increased focus on reputation is widely accepted and agreed upon.*

Most participants felt that EWU should continue to focus on strengthening reputation. They discussed how this will help improve overall perceptions in the community and internally. Participants could point to examples of ways EWU could be showcasing its strengths to gain greater visibility and generate EWU pride. It was mentioned that EWU should consider using words other than “improving reputation” to communicate about raising EWU’s visibility or positioning in the community.

*Community engagement is an important area for increased focus and should be an integral part of EWU’s culture.*

Participants discussed the links between community engagement and other areas in the strategic plan including mission, vision, institution of innovation and reputation. They recognized the importance of connecting with the community and wanted to see this area focused on more.
Key findings by topic

The following key findings are organized by the main topic areas comments fell into during the feedback sessions. Under each topic area, you will see strengths, areas for improvement and general comments and action items. If a section is missing under a topic area, this means there were no comments given for that section. The general comments and action items section captures suggestions and recommendations for strategies. When the word “participants” is used in a bullet, this means that the comment was mentioned more than once. All feedback from the facilitated feedback sessions, faculty retreats and index cards is included in the findings.

Mission

Strengths
- Participants commented on the concise and easy to remember construction of the mission.
- One participant mentioned the preference for brevity in the new draft mission versus the old lengthy mission statement.
- It was also mentioned that the draft represents who EWU is as an organization and is well-structured.
- Participants liked the student-centered component of the draft mission.
- One participant mentioned he/she likes the focus on a liberal arts education including critical thinking and cultural enrichment.

Areas for improvement
- Participants mentioned that the draft mission wasn’t unique to Eastern.
- Participants mentioned that the draft mission was not very inspiring.
  - A forward thinking and progressive draft would make it more compelling.
- Participants mentioned the importance of EWU’s benefit/ties to the surround community.
- Participants mentioned the need for clarity around how the draft mission is used/should be used internally and externally.
- Participants were unclear about excellence in learning, specifically how this is defined and what it means.
- One participant mentioned that if the mission is to target first generation students then the draft mission is too wordy and academic.
- It was mentioned that transformation and what this means is vague.
- One participant felt that the student-centered portion of the mission needs to be clearly defined.
  - One participant felt that there should be more emphasis on learning and that this needs to be at the forefront.
- One participant mentioned that graduate level education is missing from the draft mission.
- One participant felt that the concept of critical thinking was missing from the draft mission.
- One participant mentioned that student success should be tied to something specific.
- One participant mentioned that the building a new environment isn’t what EWU is doing. The university isn’t new and has doing great work for many years.

General comments and action items
- Two participants provided sample mission text:
“EWU makes incredible opportunities accessible for all”
It was commented that this mission ties in access and is simple
“EWU provides opportunities for personal transformation through learning”

- One participant mentioned the word progressive as an addition to the draft mission to demonstrate that EWU remains competitive.
- One participant felt that beyond the mission, that how EWU handles the percentage of students who aren’t at the freshman level when they enter EWU should be addressed and defined.
- It was mentioned that after the mission, vision and values are finalized there will need to be training for faculty, staff and administrators on how to incorporate the new pieces in long-range planning, short-term decision making and daily activities.

**Vision**

**Strengths**

- Integrity was mentioned as something important.
- One participant liked that the vision speaks to the public good that comes out of public education.

**Areas for improvement**

- Participants mentioned that the draft vision was not very inspiring and needed to be.
- Participants mentioned the need for clarity around how the draft mission is used/should be used internally and externally.
- Participants were uncertain on whom the vision is for and whether it was specific to EWU, the region, state or country.
  - One participant felt the vision should be the vision for what EWU will become.
  - One participant felt that EWU’s role in achieving the mission was not included.
- Participants felt that the concept of critical thinking was missing from the draft vision.
- Participants mentioned the importance of EWU’s benefit/ties to the surround community being captured.
- One participant was concerned about the relevance of the vision.
- One participant was confused with consistency in the statements and how they align with each other.
- One participant mentioned adding the term workforce.
- One participant mentioned adding a “global” component.
- Use of the word engaged in the vision was suggested.

**General comments and action items**

- Understanding how to measure aspects of the vision, specifically around student success and attrition rates was unclear along with where EWU sees itself fitting in with other universities.
- It was mentioned that after the mission, vision and values are finalized there will need to be training for faculty, staff and administrators on how to incorporate the new pieces in long-range planning, short-term decision making and daily activities.
Values

Strengths
- One participant mentioned that the values stand out among the mission, vision and values.
- One participant mentioned that he/she connects personally with the values.

Areas for improvement
- Under access, change “expand” to “provide access to opportunities.”
- Participants felt the order of how the values are listed should be considered.
  - Two participants felt that integrity should be moved up in the order.
  - One participant felt quality should come before access in the order.
  - One participant felt the order of values should be integrity, student-centered, access, inclusiveness and quality.
- Participants were unclear on who will and how to define student needs.
  - It was also mentioned that graduate students’ needs and the differences from undergraduate students should be considered.
- Participants felt that the bullet below access should be shortened and not just for students, just for opportunity and success.
- Participants felt that the concept of critical thinking was missing from the draft vision.
- Participants mentioned the importance of EWU’s benefit/ties to the surround community being captured.
- One participant mentioned the need for clarity around how the draft mission is used/should be used internally and externally.
- One suggestion was consider articulating that students come first.
- Under integrity, consider changing the word foster to expect or demand.
- The statement should change the order to socially and culturally enriched citizens.

General comments and action items
- One participant mentioned the importance of EWU’s role in educating students from diverse backgrounds and recognizing examples in the community, such as Doug Clark, who demonstrate the value of transformation that occurs at EWU.
- It was mentioned that after the mission, vision and values are finalized there will need to be training for faculty, staff and administrators on how to incorporate the new pieces in long-range planning, short-term decision making and daily activities.

Student Success

Strengths
- One participant mentioned that the strategies and goals are admirable, appropriate and specific.
- One participant mentioned that the focus area was good.
- One participant mentioned that the strategies look good.

Areas for improvement
- Participants discussed the importance of incorporating the role of faculty in the student success focus area and not only a focus on student success, but also a focus on faculty success.
• One participant mentioned the concern around expanding and fulfilling the goals and strategies discussed in the focus areas in an environment where resources are tight.
• One participant mentioned that the focus area seems targeted toward undergraduate students and graduate students need to be incorporated and considered as their needs are different.
• One participant would like to see this focus area include reference to the EWU faculty that are able to teach students how to think critically and can get jobs and adapt to different situations. The participant feels that EWU has faculty that do this well and this is something to build on.
• The first strategy example should say program.
• The third bullet under strategies was considered condescending by one participant.
• One participant felt student success should be defined.
• One participant felt that the producing students who are well-rounded individuals and the role student life plays in this should be addressed.
• One participant wanted to see critical thinking incorporated.
• Change the word “level” to “potential.”
• Under the goal of student success, delete “in their careers and in their life.”
• Under the goal of student success, change life to lives.
• One participant felt that the emphasis should be on teaching and not research.
• One participant felt that diversity/student access is not addressed.

General comments and action items

• Improving graduation rates, bringing in students who are ready for college and giving opportunities to first generation students all need to be considered and EWU needs to make a decision to bring in better-prepared students.
• One participant would like to see the staff become engaged with the students and more relationship building and would like EWU to encourage all staff to engage in the focus area goals.
  o With this, EWU will need to give them tools to help them do this.
• Consider a strategy about hiring faculty who inspire learning.
• One participant discussed the metrics of student success and the current measure of success as attrition rate has a lot of components that influence this. This participant would like to see a metric that measures student success effectively.
• An example of the role of faculty in student success given includes a low student/teacher ratio and EWU’s support of faculty so they can better support students.
• One participant would like the strategy around improving student advising defined and agreed that some advisors are stretched thin and would be open to exploring change and ways to improve.
• EWU needs to find a way to meet the needs to develop students who have a broad understanding and are also employable and able to find jobs in the region.
• One participant described student success as when students find out what they are passionate about and can identify what they want to focus on at EWU.
• One participant described the relationships that faculty have with students as unique to EWU.
• A program for at risk students was suggested to help students improve and succeed.
• One participant focused on the importance of the role that advising plays in student success. It was mentioned that it impacts retention and that students don’t have an understanding of the benefits of advising. The participant encouraged those with decision-making power to include those in advising when identifying strategies to improve advising.
Track placement of students post-graduation.

Suggestions for new degree programs included:
- Masters in Accounting
- Applied Masters in Economics
- Revise the Entrepreneur program
- Bank Management
- Community Organization
- Masters in Health
- International Business
- Logistics and Supply Chain Management
- Tribal Planning
- Urban Studies

Determine criteria in offering online or face-to-face programs.

Make courses compliant for certificate programs (i.e.: health benefits, actuarial).

Track and guide students to make successful choices in their majors.

Revisit the math competency issue.

Adopt hybrid/online course for OPSM 330 (Bellevue College)

Consider growing programs at Bellevue College and be compliant with AACSB accreditation.

Increase emphasis on writing initiatives.

Offer tutoring at Riverpoint.

Create an early identification process to help students.

Create professional development opportunities for students.

Create Leadership Lecture Series sponsored by the Accounting Advisory Board.

Assign student group involvement outside of the classroom and pair up groups as a class assignment.

Offer guaranteed graduate in four degrees.

Obtain and evaluate withdrawal reasons.

Offer more mentoring programs with professional staff.

Offer online courses as support.

Ensure the right types of students are taking online courses.

Expand the availability of affordable EWU logo wear that employees can wear to work.

Develop a mentoring program with community leaders/members and underprepared students.

There needs to be a strategy that addresses the overall infrastructure that impacts student living and learning including facilities, classroom environment, safety, parking, etc.

Institution of Innovation

Strengths
- The virtual learning is important to expanding access to help students succeed.

Areas for improvement
- Participants felt that undergraduate and graduate research should be included.
- In the final bullet, include enhance undergraduate and graduate programs.
- A suggestion given for the third bullet included:
  - Enhance and support faculty research programs that promote participation of students and community partnerships.
• Start the statement with utilizes and take out “build an environment that.”
• It was mentioned that international or globalization themes are missing.
• It was mentioned that creativity aspects and a professional component are missing from the goals and strategies.
• Incorporate student more into the focus area.

General comments and action items
• One participant felt that EWU needs to expand online offerings and degree offerings online.
  o Another participant felt that to be innovative, EWU needs to do more here and provide an online experience that is different.
• One participant felt that an example of innovation at EWU is faculty research and helping develop new technology that grows the local economy. In addition, building local relationships with companies and organizations that will help students get a job is another example. It was mentioned that EWU has a role in building jobs and well-educated students.
• One participant would like to see an example or strategy that relates locally and not just regionally and nationally.
• One participant felt that innovation needs to be part of everything done at EWU and needs to expand to the role everyone plays.
• One participant spoke about being suspicious of the virtual learning and the direction is going. It was mentioned that it gives a wrong impression if EWU is just responding to pressures from other institutions such as University of Phoenix.
• One participant felt that the virtual campus should be built around in-load teaching for faculty.
• Consider other ways to be innovative other than technology.
• One participant would like to see more support of faculty to continue doing research beyond just monetary support.

Reputation

Areas for improvement
• One participant mentioned that improving reputation has been a goal at EWU for decades and the word reputation should not be used.
• Participants felt that the word improve should be replaced with continue to build or strengthen.
  o Another suggestion included: Communicate EWU’s high quality academic programs, community engagement and innovation.
• Cut down the statement to end after academic programs.
• Consider adding professional involvement.
• Incorporate the word visibility.
• Consider adding an alumni focus.

General comments and action items
• Participants mentioned that EWU sports is not widely recognized in comparison to GU and WSU.
• One participant felt that the internal focus and an internal campaign to sell the university will be important to this goal area and effort should be put into this.
• A school that is involved in the community will influence the reputation.
• Showcasing EWU’s successes will support morale.
One participant offered an observation that Riverpoint is mentioned as WSU consistently in the news without a mention of EWU and this is something that EWU should be recognized for.

One idea given included having an Eagle pride day once a week.

One participant mentioned that EWU lacks tradition as a whole. They felt this was improving, but that there isn’t widespread communication about activities taking place on campus. It was also mentioned that now is the time to create traditions for the future and that this could influence reputation.

One example of success given included the economic indicators produced by a department at EWU and the widespread community use of this. They felt this should be highlighted more and that students could/should be a part of producing this.

One participant felt pride when seeing EWU’s name in the business section of the paper.

One participant mentioned that online social media presence is very important for EWU’s exposure and this should be strengthened.

One participant recognized that there is an opportunity to build EWU’s brand and position the university as a place that includes innovative teaching and puts students in touch with the community.

Community Engagement

Areas for improvement

- Include “build recognition” instead of “reputation.”
- Consider using the word “increase” instead of “strengthen.”
- Consider integrating this goal and the institution of innovation as they have symmetry.
- Incorporate service learning.
- Document faculty community service areas.
- One participant felt that the goal should be about more than increasing visibility but also about learning.
- Consider adding the word “connection” in place of “engagement.”
- Include a critical thinking component in community engagement. An example given included:
  - Develop programs to support students in entry level classes such as more writer center support.

General comments and action items

- EWU should be a benefit to the community as a part of the institution’s mission, vision and values.
- EWU could offer some time off, could be paid time off, which you would get when you participate in community activities. When doing this, staff could wear their EWU apparel.
- EWU could have a community engagement requirement for students to graduate as other universities do.
- EWU could develop a mentor program with business and community leaders and students to incorporate business expertise into the education process.
- EWU should have a bigger presence in the schools in Cheney.
- EWU’s community has expanded over the years and community engagement should expand to include these communities.
- EWU could engage a student group that could focus on community engagement and they could provide feedbacks at forums.
- EWU could seek out diverse opportunities to serve the community.
- Students could have assignments to go out into the field and bring knowledge back to the classrooms.
- If EWU is the institution that is involved in the community from staff and faculty to students this will be a bit part of the reputation.
- We need to help students understand what it means to be a member of a community and create a system that does this.
  - Participants felt that many students in Cheney are not good neighbors.